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REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested. Claims 3, 6, 10, and 13 have been amended; Claims 2, 5, 9, and 12 have been cancelled without prejudice; and no claims have been added. Therefore, claims 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, and 13 remain pending in the application.

Allowable Matter

At the outset, Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, and 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As suggested by the Examiner, Applicants have amended claims 3, 6, 10, and 13 to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 4 and 11 are dependent on amended claims.

Information Disclosure Statement

IDS mailed March 1, 2005:

Applicant submitted a supplemental information disclosure statement on March 1, 2005 citing two European Patents and a European Search Report. The Examiner has returned, with the most recent office action which was mailed on June 7, 2005, a PTO/SB/08A form with initials next to each of the European patent references and a PTO/SB/08B form citing the European Search Report. However, the Examiner has crossed through the European Search Report and included the notation "non-publishing paper." However, Applicants respectfully point out that European Search

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Reports are routinely published and are available for public viewing. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the European Search Report, place an initial next to the reference, and make the reference of record in the pending application. Applicants have provided a copy of the reference and a clean PTO/SB/08B form for the Examiner's convenience.

Claim Rejection under 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 2, 5, 9, and 12 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 6,654,014 of Endo et al. in view of EP 0 859 338 of Yano et al. However, Applicants have cancelled claims 2, 5, 9, and 12 without disclaimer in order to expedite issuance of the claims which the Examiner has indicated are allowable. Non-allowed claims may be pursued in a continuation application and the substance of the rejection may be addressed at that time.

The rejection under 35 USC 103(a) is currently moot in view of Applicant's amendment.

Fees Believed to be Due

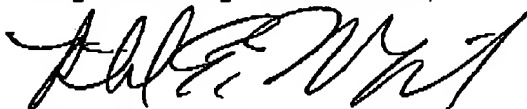
The present application was initially filed with a fee for a total of 16 claims with 4 claims being independent claims. The above amendment results in there now being a total of 6 claims with 4 claims being independent claims. Thus, no fees are believed to be due.

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C O N C L U S I O N

By way of this response, Applicant has made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain any outstanding issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Richard E. Wawrzyniak at (858) 552-1311 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard E. Wawrzyniak

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Dated: 8/23/05

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